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Fiftieth Session

Official Records

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Wednesday, 27 September 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

The President: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Zhan Videnov, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Videnov (Bulgaria): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election is a clear recognition of the high esteem your country justly enjoys as an important link between different cultures and continents. This in turn has enabled Portugal to become an active partner of those countries, like Bulgaria, that are progressing towards democracy and a market economy within a united Europe.

In today's world of profound change the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is of significance above all as a vantage point from which to try to develop a vision for the future.

Situated at the historical crossroads of nations and civilizations, Bulgaria today is seeking both to contribute to the successful redefinition of the United Nations role in the world of tomorrow and to ensure its own national security and wellbeing. The role of the United Nations should be above all to build upon the enhanced capacity of the Organization in three crucial spheres of its activities, namely, conflict settlement and peace-keeping, post-conflict peace-building, and the laying of durable foundations for lasting peace.

Today we all recognize the emergence of a great number of new challenges to peace and security marked by extraordinary diversity and complexity. The conflict still raging in the former Yugoslavia has been a traumatic test of the key United Nations responsibility for conflict settlement and peace-keeping. The disappointments in this regard have been many and profound; yet we should all face up to the simple truth that our Organization can be only as effective as a guarantor of peace as we Member countries wish and permit it to be.

Bulgaria has from the outset strictly adhered to policies supporting a peaceful settlement under United Nations auspices. Unilaterally, it has adopted and consistently abided by the principle of non-interference in the conflict. It has chosen not to become involved, either

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directly or indirectly, in any type of military activities on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, including participation in United Nations peace-keeping. We have called upon the other countries in the region to exercise the same restraint. On the other hand, throughout the conflict Bulgaria has supported every international initiative aimed at achieving a peaceful, balanced, just and comprehensive solution.

In keeping with its obligations under the United Nations Charter and as a means of restarting negotiations, Bulgaria has consistently implemented the international sanctions regime. This step was taken on the basis of a national consensus that, despite the heavy burden such sanctions created for Bulgaria, it was our duty to implement them as a dependable member of the international community.

Yet Bulgaria has sustained debilitating losses as a result of the sanctions. Over the past few years, we have repeatedly drawn attention to this problem, both as it concerns Bulgaria and as it concerns cooperation with other affected States. The sanction-induced losses so far amount to well over 25 per cent of Bulgaria's estimated gross domestic product for 1995. This has made Bulgaria by far the country most seriously affected.

Bulgaria's policies favouring a peaceful outcome have helped to establish it as a stabilizing factor in a most deeply troubled region of Europe. At the same time, we feel that such recognition also contributes to enhancing the peace-making potential of the United Nations itself. Positive in raction between the policies of individual Member States and the decisions and measures of the world Organization is the decisive factor in enhancing the latter's key mission, that of helping to settle conflicts and keep the peace.

However, Bulgaria's experience also shows that in order to discharge this mission successfully in the future the United Nations needs carefully to rethink its main peace-keeping instruments, such as economic sanctions and peace-keeping missions.

In areas outside its immediate vicinity Bulgaria has in recent years contributed ground forces and civilian and police observers. In the operation in Cambodia, generally considered a success, several young Bulgarians lost their lives. We sympathize with other countries that have sustained human losses in subsequent missions, including the latest in the former Yugoslavia. We therefore strongly support the view that there is a need to reform and improve the ways in which such missions are planned and executed, with priority given to enhancing the safety of United Nations personnel.

Recently, mediation between parties to a given conflict has been successfully utilized in the discharge of United Nations conflict-settlement missions. In this context, we welcome the agreement reached between neighbouring Greece and the Republic of Macedonia as a most important step towards lessening tensions in the whole of southeastern Europe.

A further major contribution in this regard should be active United Nations support for and collaboration in bringing to a successful conclusion the present intensive efforts to attain peace in Bosnia. Bulgaria welcomes the United States peace initiative and the efforts to implement it in close cooperation with the United Nations and the countries in the Contact Group. This has opened up real possibilities for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Experience derived from the Yugoslav crisis highlights the importance of another crucial United Nations function, namely, post-conflict peace-building. Today, it is obvious that although negotiations have not yet achieved a final settlement there is a need to begin to address the problems of post-conflict peace-building without delay.

One set of such problems concerns the reduction of the levels of armaments and armed forces. It is clear that conflict settlement would be pointless were it not accompanied by a set of actions designed to remove the sources of real or potential security threats in the area.

Thus, in the arms-control field Bulgaria shares the view that the establishment of a future harmonized arms-control regime in Europe should combine measures of both a pan-European and a regional character. Such measures should be based on the understanding that security must be indivisible and that any disproportionate concentration of armaments, in particular when coupled with a lack of control mechanisms, undermines security and stability. Therefore, the establishment of a credible system of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures for the territory of the former Yugoslavia, as part of and in line with the pan-European regimes, must be an essential part of a comprehensive post-war settlement. Relevant international bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should play a very important role in this respect. The main objective should

be to attain levels of armaments that will preclude once and for all any temptation to use force.

The second set of peace-building measures concerns post-conflict economic reconstruction and stabilization.

Important work has been done at the United Nations in the past several years for developing an integrated approach to successfully implementing reconstruction programmes. Such an approach should encompass four interrelated aspects: strategic issues of reconstruction, needs and capabilities, post-conflict reconstruction framework and mobilization of resources.

Today plans for reconstruction are being laid for parts of the conflict area in the former Yugoslavia. Bulgaria is particularly well placed to contribute to such plans. This is so for a number of reasons: first, its long-standing relationship with the countries in and around the conflict area and its consistent policies in favour of a balanced and durable political settlement; secondly, because of the experience and know-how of Bulgarian companies with a long record of practical work in the area; thirdly, acquired knowledge and expertise in working with international financial institutions in implementing programmes for reconstruction and development. For all these reasons, Bulgaria could be an important factor contributing to the success of any reconstruction effort in the area.

The emerging pattern of structured coordination between various organizations within and outside the United Nations system provides guidelines and a very useful example to follow. It encourages our own thinking as we start exploring practical and institutional possibilities for contributing to the concerted international efforts in this respect.

At the same time, Bulgaria has every reason to expect also to receive a part of the international post-conflict assistance for the region. Effectively building the peace in the region requires that neighbouring countries that bore the brunt of sanctions and have sustained inordinate losses be included on a priority basis in the list of recipients of international assistance.

Bulgaria's concerns over the subject of sanctions have already become well known. We have formulated them *in extenso* on several occasions. In fact, the international community and, in particular, the General Assembly have recognized the right and the need to include non-target third countries in programmes for reconstruction and development. At its two previous sessions, on Bulgarian initiatives, the General Assembly adopted by consensus two resolutions on this set of issues. This year again, my delegation intends to submit a corresponding draft resolution which I hope will receive universal support.

At this point, I cannot but underline the findings and recommendations contained in the report (A/50/60) of the Secretary-General entitled "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" and, in particular, his conclusion that the price of sanctions implementation should be borne equally by all Member States and not only by those who have had the misfortune of being neighbours or important economic partners of a sanctions target country. I would like to take this opportunity to commend especially the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in this particularly important field of United Nations activities.

It is our view that, as a result of work already done, today there exists a significant scope of agreement on the ways and means for overcoming the specific economic problems confronting the affected States, as reflected in part IV of resolution 47/120 and resolutions 48/210 and 49/21 A of the General Assembly. Bulgaria is participating, and will continue to do so, in an effort to help towards the successful completion of the discussion on these issues in the United Nations.

Together with conflict settlement and post-conflict peace-building, a third, parallel line of action should be undertaken without delay. It should focus on laying durable foundations for lasting peace through economic and social development. The task of achieving durable stability and security regarding peace and economic development has always been of particular relevance in South-Eastern Europe. It has become all the more so in the light of evolving European integration.

In order to boost such development and lasting stability, there is an urgent need for concerted efforts by the international organizations and specialized agencies within the United Nations system, coupled with broader and more intensive cooperation at a regional level. It is doubtless necessary to avoid overlapping and duplication. Yet a mechanism must be put in place for effectively coordinating programmes for early implementation of achievable objectives.

The Ministerial Conference on environment for Europe, which is going to be held in Sofia the last week of this October, is a particularly apt example of this approach. Another initiative along these lines is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE) seminar on the role of trans-European infrastructure for stability and cooperation in the Black Sea region, which will also take place in Sofia, a month later. It will be dealing with priority projects for developing regional transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure as factors both for economic growth and for lasting stability and peace in the area.

The above forums could provide valuable inputs for the work undertaken within the European Union with the aim of elaborating a comprehensive regional strategy for South-Eastern Europe. Such a strategy could be based on the approach embodied in the measures accompanying the Pact on Stability in Europe, put forward at the time by the Union. Cooperation at the subregional level may also prove to be a factor of significant practical importance in this context.

For its part, Bulgaria, in the course of the past several months, has attempted to develop thinking and proposals for regional stability, security and cooperation which could interact with initiatives and programmes developed by European and international institutions and major world partners. It is our belief that developing the economic dimensions of regional security will greatly favour the overcoming of local tensions rooted in the past, as well as the full-fledged implementation of the basic principles of relations between States under the Helsinki Act and the Paris Charter.

With a view to promoting such regional cooperation, I would like to state from this lofty rostrum that Bulgaria is ready to host a gathering of interested Central and South-Eastern European States at the governmental level in the course of 1996. Given careful preparation and the support of the international community, such a high-level meeting could become a major step towards lasting security and stability in a historically much-troubled part of Europe.

The parameters of the new international system are still taking shape today. What is positive is that in the days of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations the international community is looking for pragmatic and responsible approaches to lend new meaning to the Organization's mission. The discussion of the possibilities of and prospects for United Nations restructuring can draw on the accumulated wealth of experience and take advantage of the prevailing spirit of cooperation. Let us make the best possible use of them and together venture into the new century stronger, wiser and more united.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made and for his personal references to me and my country.

Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: The next speaker is the Vice Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kinkel (Germany) *(spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation):* Please accept my warm congratulations, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. At the same time, I wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Essy, for his successful work.

The United Nations 50 years on — that makes this session of the General Assembly an event of extra-special significance. The people of the world have high expectations. We must take stock, but in so doing we must, above all, look to the future.

The representatives of 50 nations who assembled in San Francisco in the year 1945 were intended to be, as President Truman put it, "the architects of a better world". What has become of their blue-print?

Today the family of nations has 185 members. Millions of people all over the world owe their lives, their freedom and their health, their jobs and their homes, to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Decolonization has been completed, apartheid has been overcome, and respect for human rights is no longer an internal affair. In the field of disarmament a historic breakthrough has been achieved: in May of this year the proliferation of nuclear weapons was halted. That constitutes a big step towards making the world safe for mankind.

All these are considerable achievements which many critics of the United Nations have overlooked in this jubilee year, achievements on which you, in particular, Mr. Secretary-General, and your staff are to be congratulated. Indeed, the United Nations, in spite of some unjustified criticism, can take pride in what it has done for the cause of peace, freedom and human dignity.

Especially worthy of our gratitude and appreciation are the more than 68,000 United Nations troops currently

serving on missions in all regions of the world. When servicemen from Asia, Africa or Latin America attend to the basic needs of refugees in Europe, in the former Yugoslavia, and keep the beleaguered people from starving, then that is, I believe, a marvellous indication that the "one world" is a reality. Lest we forget: nearly 5,000 of those troops, the Blue Helmets, have been killed or wounded in the line of duty. The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel must be put into effect as soon as possible. This we owe to all those who serve the United Nations.

As we recap the events of the past year, we also have to consider the huge problems now confronting the world Organization. The ability to safeguard peace: that is the world's main criterion when judging the United Nations. And here we have reached a critical point.

Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia: these countries stand for disappointment and setbacks as well. However, I should like to make it very clear that in such cases the culprit is quickly found, too quickly. Nothing is more convenient than to point to the alleged inefficiency of the United Nations. And nothing could be further from the truth.

When it has not been possible to help people, when United Nations troops have been humiliated in the former Yugoslavia, it has in nearly every instance not been the fault of the United Nations. The problems have lain in its unsatisfactory mandate, in the lack of political will on the part of Member States, and, unfortunately, in the shortage of funds. It is we, the Members, who cause the difficulties.

Following the holding of United Nations troops as hostages, the atrocities in Zepa and Srebrenica, and the terrible second bloodbath in Sarajevo's market place, the community of nations has demonstrated that there is a limit to the amount of brutality and contempt for international law it will tolerate. And there has to be a limit.

The resolve of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has paid off — not only for the people of Sarajevo, who for three years have been starving and freezing and kept under constant fire, but also for the peace process.

Yesterday, here in New York, the parties to the conflict had another meeting with the Contact Group, of which Germany is a member. Another step forward was achieved on the constitutional issue following the result achieved in Geneva, and I believe this step to be a decisive one. For the first time since the conflict began there is a realistic prospect of a negotiated peace settlement.

But I should like to warn against being over-euphoric. A lot has still to be done. We shall have to put one stone on top of another stone in order to finish this building. This time none of the participants should leave the conference table until an agreement has been reached — a peaceful agreement at the negotiating table, and not an agreement on the basis of military actions. Anyone who continues to prefer bloodshed, to prefer military actions, will be taking a great responsibility upon himself.

From the beginning, Germany has played an active part in these efforts. We have never taken sides, nor did we ever want to take sides, against one party; rather, we have always taken up the cause of the victims, those who have been tormented and driven from their homes.

To date, the German Government's humanitarian aid in the region amounts to more than 1 billion Deutsche marks. And I should like to stress strongly that we have no double standards, nor should we have double standards. In the short time since August, we have provided more than 6 million marks to help Serbian refugees from Krajina.

My country has contributed in various ways to all peace-keeping operations. By sending medical personnel to Split and deploying Tornado fighters for the first time — fighters which we have made available in Piacenze, Italy — in a United Nations peace-keeping mission, we have also shown that we do not merely talk about taking on more responsibility, but that we act to do so.

We will also meet our responsibility when it comes to implementing the terms of a peace settlement — and I hope that this settlement will come soon. The reconstruction of Bosnia's economy requires a genuinely international cooperative effort, an effort on the part of the international community. The European Union — and Germany, of course, as a member of the European Union — will play its part.

What lessons can and must we learn from what has happened in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia?

First, the United Nations must confine itself to doing what is feasible. Its resources are obviously being strained beyond the limit. It cannot take on every

responsibility. It cannot solve all the problems that the world is confronted with.

Secondly, the extent and duration of the commitment of the United Nations must be more precise, the political and military objectives must be clearly defined, and there must be a realistic and, above all, coherent mandate.

Thirdly, if the world Organization is going to intervene, then it must act consistently and resolutely. There must be no repetition of what happened in Rwanda or Zepa or Srebrenica.

Fourthly, cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations such as NATO must from the outset be planned in such a way that maximum speed and, above all, efficiency are assured.

Fifthly, we believe that the regional organizations must play a larger role than they have done so far. Not every problem must go straight to the United Nations. In Europe, for instance, and in other places of the world too, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could assume much greater responsibility. However, we have to enable it to do so.

Still, let there be no illusions. Peace-keeping is not just a fair-weather exercise. Such missions will always be apt to create problems for the world Organization.

And, in view of the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been saved in Somalia and Bosnia, who can argue with an easy conscience that the United Nations should not have intervened? And many of these people have already been forgotten. What is required here is an increased peace-keeping capacity — constructive help, not destructive criticism.

And to those who over and over again have called into question the actions of the United Nations and its peace-keeping operations, I would like to address the following question: Is there an alternative? Who could take the place of the United Nations? Indeed, Europe has not been able to cope with this tragedy in its own house as well as we all hoped it would.

But nor should we forget the European Union's achievements in the former Yugoslavia. It paved the way for the Contact Group's ongoing peace efforts.

To my mind, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia emphasizes how important and right it was for Western Europe to embark on a new course after the Second World War, a course that was directed against nationalism and against the use of force. For four decades, as a result of the East-West conflict, not all European nations were able to follow that route of the European Community, today's European Union.

The European Union is now striving to correct that terrible aberration and bridge the gulfs that separate it from Central and Eastern Europe. The goal is one Europe, a Europe in which the old big-Power politics and hegemonic aspirations can never again take root.

That Europe must have a legitimate place for Russia, but for Ukraine as well. The European house does not consist solely of the European Union: it has many rooms. Neither of these two nations, Russia or Ukraine, should be left outside. To our Russian and Ukrainian partners and friends I say: Europe needs your contribution and it does so also in bringing peace to the former Yugoslavia. Here their new partnership with the European Union and NATO must — and, I add, will — prove its value.

Many feared that when the East-West confrontation disappeared Europe would focus exclusively on its own affairs. That has not been the case. The European Union is intensifying its political, economic and cultural cooperation with the other regions of the world.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America it is already a model for peace, prosperity and regional integration. In the United Nations the European Union is the principal partner for dialogue with the developing countries.

The European Union and Germany have been particularly active in promoting peace and economic recovery in the Middle East. The recent agreement on the West Bank worked out by Yassir Arafat and Shimon Peres is another important milestone on the road to lasting peace in that region. I congratulate both sides on their courage and on their far-sightedness. The United States is playing a major part in this process in this region. We are grateful to them for that. Egypt has rendered an important contribution as an intermediary.

Increasing the peace-keeping capacity of the United Nations also involves reforming the Security Council. There is now a global consensus, I believe, that this is necessary.

The first steps towards reform have already been taken. More changes have been made to the Council's methods of work and more transparency achieved in the past two years than in the whole of the previous four decades.

Like many other Member States, Germany considers that the Council should have more permanent and non-permanent members. The nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America need wider representation and I think we owe it to them. They have deserved it. The same applies to several countries with an important global role.

Germany, with the support of many Member States, has announced its interest in permanent membership of the Security Council. Our willingness to assume greater responsibility, also within this framework, is for us the logical and consistent extension of our commitment to the United Nations. This commitment is consistent with the fundamental principle of our foreign policy, which is to give priority to multilateral cooperation. We have abided by that principle in pursuing European integration, and we believe that that same principle would help us play a useful role in the Security Council.

The world finds itself faced with many new conflicts and challenges. It is crucial that in dealing with them we should focus our efforts more than we have done so far on conflict prevention. A political solution must remain the first option. That requires wider use of human rights observers, improvements in the United Nations early warning system, the promotion of democratization and the observation of election processes, as successfully done recently in Mozambique.

We have provided a list of experienced intermediaries for the tasks of preventive diplomacy. The example of Macedonia shows what the preventive deployment of United Nations Blue Helmets can achieve. I am very happy about the agreement that has been achieved between Greece and Macedonia on this extremely important issue. Preventing fire can save countless lives and in any case it is cheaper than putting fires out. On my recent visit to Rwanda I was deeply shocked, in the truest sense of the word, by the atrocities that have been perpetrated there by human beings on other human beings. If the United Nations had intervened at an early stage and resolutely, many lives could have been saved.

Germany has set up a substantial emergency aid programme for Rwanda. We are trying in particular to do something about the awful prison conditions. I myself visited prisons, in Kigali for example, and I must tell you that I have never seen anything like that in all my life. Urgent remedies are needed here to ensure that one injustice is not followed by another. I travelled to Burundi too, and I returned deeply saddened and concerned. We must not make the same mistakes in Burundi.

Disarmament, arms control and confidence-building — these are some of the main components of conflict prevention. In recent years we have made the kind of progress that no one would have believed possible at the height of the arms race 15 years ago. The task of buttressing this breakthrough and building on the achievements has acquired great political significance.

A few weeks ago we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the first atomic bomb explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear weapons must never, never, be used again. They must be eliminated completely, as required by article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That aim was reaffirmed by the nuclear Powers at the New York Conference extending the Treaty.

Never has the door to a ban on every kind of nuclear-test explosion been wider open than today. We must now direct all our efforts to the achievement of this goal. The Geneva negotiations must produce such a comprehensive ban by the autumn of 1996 at the latest.

Anti-personnel mines, too, are "weapons of mass destruction". Day in, day out, they are taking a terrible toll on human life, and many of the victims are women and, above all, innocent children. If any kind of weapon must be outlawed, then this one should be.

Eliminating this scourge is a task of the highest priority, particularly in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Georgia and Cambodia. Germany, together with its European partners, will continue the initiative in this direction during this session of the General Assembly.

At the First Review Conference of the Convention on certain conventional weapons, which opened in Vienna the day before yesterday, tougher export restrictions will have to be agreed on and a strict ban imposed on the use of anti-personnel mines.

I appeal to all Members of the United Nations: In the name of humanity, accede to the Convention on certain conventional weapons as quickly as possible.

There are good reasons why the work of the United Nations began with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations is more than a mere gathering of sovereign States. It is based on the common belief in the dignity and worth of every human being, and it is my view that this must remain the focal point of all political activity.

Universal Children's Day, celebrated a week ago, reminded us of the awful fate to which these, the weakest members of society, are often exposed. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) therefore needs the support of every one of us.

The task of helping those people all over the world who have been persecuted and deprived of their rights must remain at the top of the political agenda. Pressure from the international community, the media, non-governmental organizations and private citizens must be maintained. Those who torture people and who treat human rights with contempt should not be able to sleep peacefully. To this end, the High Commissioner's position will have to be strengthened and the Centre for Human Rights better equipped. People who commit war crimes must know that they will be prosecuted under international criminal law. Hence, Germany strongly urges the establishment of a permanent international court of justice.

But above all, stronger measures to protect minorities are called for. "Ethnic cleansing" is no basis for peaceful coexistence, either in Europe or anywhere else.

More than 27 million people are today on the move. This is one of the most dramatic events of our time. The cause is not only hunger and distress, but, in most cases, unfortunately, ethnic and religious fanaticism. Diversity of culture and tradition is one of the world's greatest assets, and no one should seek to impose a particular model of society on others.

The fact that there exists a core of human rights which everyone has to respect is quite a different matter. This was reaffirmed at the Vienna Conference and should not be challenged by anyone.

Today the dialogue of cultures is central to the quest for peace. I have invited leading representatives of the Islamic world to come to Germany in November to participate in such a dialogue. My feeling is that we have to learn to understand each other better. I have also urged that the Bosnia Contact Group closely coordinate its efforts with the Islamic Contact Group.

In Germany, two and a half million Muslims are living harmoniously with the local community. In my view, it is extremely important that we should develop cooperation and mutual trust at the international level as well, and I am speaking as the German Foreign Minister. Islam cannot be equated with terrorism or fundamentalism. No new enemy stereotypes must be allowed to develop. I think that we should be happy that we have been able to do away with the old ones.

Peace and development are inseparable. Any reform of the United Nations worthy of that name should therefore encompass economic and social matters as well. This fiftieth anniversary is a unique opportunity to create a modern framework for a new development in partnership. Work on the Agenda for Development must therefore be completed as soon as possible.

Apart from improving and simplifying the finance regime for United Nations development activities, the chief concern is to coordinate and efficiently implement the results of the world conferences on the environment, social problems, population growth and women — especially the Conference on Women that has just ended in Beijing.

These are the main interrelated issues of our time as we pursue the goal of peace. The planet Earth must remain habitable for future generations as well. Progress is possible only through equal and fair partnership between North and South. Germany will continue to exert every effort to this end.

None of this can be done unless we can come to grips with the biggest crisis confronting the United Nations: that of its financial situation. There is no reason to deny that it has assumed dramatic proportions; one has to be quite frank about this. This crisis can be overcome only if all contributors, and especially the main ones, meet their obligations punctually. Germany is the third largest contributor to the United Nations, and we pay our bills. We cannot allow a situation to continue where those who pay their contributions on time are also burdened with the arrears of wealthier Members. Unless decisive action is taken very soon, whole areas of activity could grind to a halt.

I very much welcome the confirmation by the American Secretary of State that the United States stands by the obligations arising from its membership. The United Nations needs an America that fulfils its leadership role, just as the United States needs a world Organization capable of, and willing to undertake, reform.

How can we overcome this financial crisis? First, we must restore the balance between the budgets for peace-keeping operations and the regular budget of the United Nations. We cannot allow resources for such operations to be used up to the point of depletion while at the same time funds for urgent programmes of economic or social development are either non-existent or have to be cut back.

Secondly, it is time we found a scale of assessments that reflects Members' actual ability to pay. You, Mr. Secretary-General, have made great efforts to rationalize the Organization's work, to ensure budgetary discipline and to reduce staff. I appeal to all Member States to give Under-Secretary-General Paschke the support he needs for his difficult job.

The United Nations is indispensable to the task of maintaining global order and as a forum and instrument for international cooperation, today no less than in the era after the Second World War. No other organization has the same ability to focus the interests and energies of the world's nations, which we believe is necessary.

The United Nations is not "the others", but us, the Members. And this Organization is only as strong and as united as we, its Members, make it.

Hence my appeal today to the Assembly: let us stop our constant vacillation between euphoria and disappointment regarding the United Nations. Let us stop apportioning blame, which leads nowhere. Let us rather merge vision and pragmatism, solidarity and responsibility for our own actions into a rational and realistic international partnership under the aegis of the United Nations. Let us give this world Organization more clout and make it more efficient and economical. Yes, we will have to slim down the United Nations. It has to save money. Let us do these things in a constructive spirit, together with, and on behalf of, the United Nations. Let us give the United Nations what it needs — including paying our dues.

That is what the world community expects of us now, and rightly so. That is the task facing the family of nations on the threshold of the new millennium. If the reforms fail, there will be only losers.

"Hope is the pillar of the world", they say in South Africa. Fifty years ago, such a pillar of hope for mankind was erected in San Francisco. Let us do everything to ensure that this pillar will continue to support the hopes of mankind in the next 50 years as well. Germany will continue to play its part.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen.

Mr. Qian Qichen (China) *(interpretation from Chinese):* Mr. President, please allow me, first of all, to warmly congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that with your remarkable ability and rich experience, you will admirably fulfil this mission. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. Amara Essy for the important contribution he has made during his presidency.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to extend my welcome and congratulations to the Republic of Palau, which was admitted into the United Nations after the last session.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. Over the past 50 years, the United Nations has stood the test of the vicissitudes in the international situation, grown steadily, scored remarkable achievements and made major contributions to the peace and prosperity of mankind. Its membership has increased from 51 at its founding to today's 185. The status and role of the United Nations, the most universal and authoritative intergovernmental organization of sovereign States today, is irreplaceable by any other international organization.

The United Nations has traversed a tortuous and uneven path over the past fifty years, just like the development of anything else. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is time to review the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, earnestly summarize the positive and negative experience, and introduce appropriate and necessary reforms so as to revitalize the United Nations and usher it into the new century with a new look to meet

the challenge of the times. This is the call of all peoples and a lofty mission of the times.

The United Nations, which was founded in the triumph of the world war against fascism, reflects the ardent desire and determination of the world's people to avert the scourge of war forever, safeguard world peace and security, carry out friendly international cooperation and achieve common development. History has repeatedly proved that adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter will enable the United Nations to play a positive role in safeguarding peace and promoting development, while violation of and departure from the purposes and principles of the Charter will impair the dignity and image of the United Nations and weaken its role. Therefore, to continue to uphold and carry forward the purposes and principles of the Charter is an unshirkable responsibility of all United Nations Members and a basic principle guiding the reform of the United Nations.

The core of the United Nations Charter is the principle of equality between sovereign States and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. All sovereign States, whether they are big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, are equal members of the international community. The internal affairs of a country should be managed by its own people. Major world affairs should be addressed by countries through consultations on the basis of equality and mutual respect. In international relations, to bully the small, oppress the poor, override the weak, impose one's own social system, ideology and values on others or interfere in other countries' internal affairs all run counter to the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Some people are publicly clamouring for "containment" of other countries, which shows that the cold war mentality still refuses to quit the stage of history. But it will ultimately be discarded by history. The post-war period of half a century proves that in handling State-to-State relations, "hot war", "cold war" or "bloc politics" do not work. Strict observance of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence are the only way for States to live in amity with each other and achieve common development.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the joint efforts of various quarters, the tendency towards the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiations has grown and international economic cooperation has gained momentum. However, there still remain many destabilizing and uncertain factors in the international situation. Hegemonism and power politics continue to hold out. Peace and development, the two major tasks of the world today, still face grave challenges.

Armed conflicts and catastrophic wars in some parts of the world remain unabated, which has not only inflicted heavy losses of life and property on the countries and peoples concerned, but also casts a shadow over regional peace and stability and that of the whole world. All this cannot but cause concern and distress among the world's people. As the background and causes behind these conflicts are complicated, to seek a just, fair and appropriate solution to them would call for tremendous and concerted efforts by all the parties concerned, the United Nations and the international community as a whole. We maintain that the parties concerned should, in the fundamental and long-term interests of the people, seek just and fair solutions through negotiations, taking into full account both history and reality as well as the reasonable interests and positions of all sides. Where consensus cannot be reached immediately, the parties concerned should exercise restraint and patience so as to prevent contradictions from intensifying and at the same time try to create conditions and an atmosphere for an eventual peaceful settlement.

United Nations peace-keeping operations in recent years have played a useful role in settling international disputes peacefully. They have both accumulated successful experience and learned lessons from setbacks. We believe that, to ensure a healthy development of United Nations peace-keeping operations and activities in other related fields such as preventive diplomacy, the following guidelines should be established and followed:

Observation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the principle of respect for State sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries;

Settlement of disputes through peaceful means such as good offices, mediation and negotiations instead of resort to frequent mandatory actions. Even humanitarian operations should not resort to military means;

Opposition to double standards and the imposition of the policies and views of one or a few countries on the Security Council. Some countries should not be allowed to carry out military intervention in the name of the United Nations;

For peace-keeping operations, adherence to the principles that have proved effective, such as obtaining prior consent from the parties concerned, observing strict neutrality and the non-use of force except for self-defence;

Adoption of a realistic approach and confining the operation within one's capability. Peace-keeping operations should be launched only when conditions are ripe and should refrain, in whatever circumstances, from becoming a party to a conflict in deviation from the fundamental orientation of such operations.

It has been demonstrated time and again that United Nations peace-keeping operations, if divorced from these guidelines, would, contrary to our wishes, fail to achieve their desired objectives and might even go astray.

Last May, the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted the decision to renew the NPT indefinitely. This serves the interests of all signatories, helps to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and is conducive to the maintenance of world peace and security. China believes that nuclear non-proliferation is only an interim step towards the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. The indefinite extension of the NPT must not be construed as an indefinite license for the nuclear-weapon States to perpetuate their prerogatives.

One year ago, also from this rostrum, on behalf of the Chinese Government I called for the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and put forward a series of complete and interrelated proposals on nuclear disarmament. We are pleased to note that the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty have produced some gratifying progress. China supports the conclusion of such a treaty no later than 1996 and will continue to work with other countries to this end. Once the treaty enters into force, China will stop its nuclear testing.

China's possession of a limited nuclear capability is entirely for self-defence and for deterring the nuclear threat against it. The Chinese Government has from the very beginning unilaterally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. China's nuclear weapons therefore do not constitute a threat to any country. We strongly urge other nuclear-weapon States to respond positively to China's initiative by immediately starting negotiations aimed at concluding a treaty on mutual non-first-use of nuclear weapons and an agreement on the non-use or non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-free zones.

It has become a trend in today's world that when countries formulate their domestic and foreign policies they accord top priority to the economy and pay close attention to national economic development. The worldwide tendency towards economic integration, regionalization and the formation of economic groupings has accelerated, and competition among States in the economic, trade, scientific and technological fields has further intensified. Under such circumstances, the developing countries are faced with a formidable challenge as they strive for economic growth and higher living standards for their people.

Furthermore, over 1 billion people on this planet remain in abject poverty; this constitutes one of the world community's most acute problems. Given much-needed support to the developing countries as they reactivate their economies and creating a favourable external environment for them are not only important conditions for the shared economic growth and common prosperity of all countries, but also a crucial guarantee for lasting peace and stability throughout the world. Given the present situation, the United Nations should ask itself to pay at least as much attention to development as to peace, effectively perform its duties under the Charter and play a more dynamic role in galvanizing economic growth and development in the developing countries. The reform of the United Nations must result in the strengthening, not the weakening, of its role in the area of development.

True, fairly rapid economic growth in the developing countries must depend primarily on their own efforts. However, it is also important for the international community, and the developed countries in particular, to take practical and effective measures to open markets, provide development funds, transfer technology, increase development aid and reduce the debt burden in favour of the developing countries. International economic cooperation should be guided by the principle of mutual opening-up, equality and mutual benefit. Such practices as implementing protectionist policies of one form or another and attaching political strings to economic assistance to developing countries are obviously misguided.

Profound changes have taken place in China amid the surging tide of change and development across the world. The 17 years that have elapsed since the

beginning of reform and opening-up in China have been unprecedented in terms of the economic growth rate and the improvement of the people's living standards. At present, China enjoys political stability, economic prosperity, ethnic harmony and vigorous advances in democracy, legality and community undertakings. China's exchanges and cooperation with the rest of the world have reached a level unprecedented in both scope and depth. Although there may still be many difficulties and challenges along the road ahead, we are confident that, through several generations of hard work, our people will lift China out of economic and cultural backwardness and turn it into a highly prosperous and democratic modern country.

The Chinese people are peace-loving people. China's history for over a century following the Opium War was one of tears, blood and humiliation in which the Chinese nation was subjected to repeated aggression, suppression and plunder at the hands of the big Powers. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. The Chinese people treasure their hard-won independence and freedom and will never commit aggression or intervene against others. China is opposed to hegemonism and power politics of any kind and will never seek hegemony for itself. With a population of 1.2 billion, China will remain a low-income developing country for a very long time and the steady improvement of our people's living standards will remain our objective, towards the attainment of which no effort will be spared. Even when China grows stronger, it will continue firmly to pursue its independent foreign policy of peace and will live in amity with other nations. A stable and prosperous China is a positive factor for peace and development in Asia and the world at large. This is a conclusion that people of vision around the world have come to share.

The Chinese people have waged heroic and unyielding struggles to resist external aggression and oppression and to defend the sovereignty, independence and unity of the country. There is but one China in the world. The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government of China. It is the sole representative of China at the United Nations, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. The peaceful reunification of the two sides of the Taiwan Straits represents the unshakable will and determination of the entire Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan. Proceeding from this reality, the Chinese Government has put forward the correct proposal on peaceful reunification within the framework of the concept of "one country, two systems" and a series of realistic and practicable policies and measures. The past few years have seen a steady expansion and deepening of exchanges and contacts between the two sides in various fields. Any attempt to obstruct peaceful reunification and to split Taiwan from China is doomed to failure. Should anyone try to do so, he would be lifting a stone only to drop it on his own toes.

History moves on. Mankind is progressing. In four years we will usher in a new millennium. The future is full of promise. Let us join hands and make concerted efforts to bring about a better world in which there are peace and cooperation, justice and equality, mutual respect and common development, a world of universal prosperity and continuous progress.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Hervé de Charette.

Mr. de Charette (France) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I should like to say first how pleased France is to see you personally presiding over the work of the General Assembly. Beyond your personal merits, which I acknowledge with pleasure, your election underscores the important contribution to the activities of the Organization of Portugal, a member of the European Union with which France feels particularly close.

The United Nations is 50 years old. As the Heads of State and Government of the European Union solemnly emphasized in Cannes last June, the collective work since the Second World War has been considerable. The European Council on that occasion paid tribute to the major contribution of the United Nations to this collective work and gave some examples: decolonization, the maintenance of international peace and security, disarmament, development, humanitarian aid and, of course, the protection of human rights.

But the successes of the Organization do not belong solely to history. This year has shown the vitality of the United Nations. In Copenhagen, the social dimension of development, the struggle against exclusion and for productive employment, which are both major challenges for all our societies, are now within the domain of our Organization. In Beijing, the principle of strict equality between men and women and the right of women to decide freely about their lives in all matters have finally been endorsed once and for all as universal values. In New York, the United Nations has begun preparatory work towards the establishment of a world criminal court. This project signals decisive progress for international humanitarian law.

In Vienna, at this very moment, a conference on the scourge of inhumane weapons is being held. France is working in particular to eradicate the scourge of the spread of anti-personnel mines. In 1993, it decided upon a unilateral moratorium on the export of these mines. Now the time has come to go one step farther. Accordingly, I wish to confirm that France has decided to adopt a unilateral moratorium on the production of all categories of anti-personnel mines. It is therefore imposing upon itself a ban on the manufacture of such weapons. France also pledges from this point on to destroy gradually its stock of anti-personnel mines. I call on all Member States to join with us and do the same thing.

This year has also been marked by the success of the New York Review and Extension Conference of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This success was a major step towards disarmament. France proposes that this coming year should be a time for further progress in this domain: disarmament should be our common goal and it should encompass all aspects of disarmament. France calls upon the States that have not yet adhered to this Treaty to do so without further delay. The struggle against the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be universal. I suggest that all the States which have already signed this Treaty multiply concerted efforts to persuade the States which have not yet signed to join them.

In addition, it is important to follow through on the new objectives decided by the review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in May. Among these, the most important is the conclusion, no later than 1996, of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty now being negotiated in Geneva. The President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, most solemnly reaffirmed on 13 June 1995 France's determination to achieve this goal and to ensure that the ban is total. France is pleased that other nuclear Powers have in turn made the same commitment. It calls on all nuclear Powers to ensure, together with all the Member States of the Organization, that this pledge is duly confirmed in the text of the future treaty and that the negotiation of the treaty is completed before the autumn of 1996.

I take this opportunity to recall the reasons that led France to complete the programme of nuclear tests that was temporarily suspended in 1992. The final series of tests now under way has no other purpose than to enable us to sign the treaty banning nuclear tests definitively. There were some who imagined and others who wished to make believe that we might reconsider such a decision. This will not happen. Once again I repeat, this is a final test series, limited to what is strictly necessary and held under conditions that have been proved to be harmless. It will enable us to adhere as early as possible to the future treaty banning tests definitively.

The disarmament effort must of course be directed towards reducing existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Substantial progress has been achieved over the past few years with the destruction of a significant number of warheads by the two main Powers. I would recall that France for its part, although it has never contributed to nuclear overarmament, reduced the nuclear warheads it had deployed by 15 per cent between 1991 and 1995.

Disarmament, however, does not apply solely to nuclear weapons. With regard to chemical weapons, I call upon all the Member States to ratify, or for those which have not yet done so to adhere to, the 1992 Convention banning chemical weapons. I regret that France is the only permanent member of the Security Council that has ratified this Convention. I hope that the other permanent members will do so in the coming months.

We must continue the effort to reduce conventional forces in Europe. France took its full part in the agreement on conventional force reductions in Europe. It proposes that the conference which will be held in May 1996 to examine the implementation of this agreement should focus on compliance by all States with a treaty that is the keystone of security in Europe. This conference should also be the occasion for further progress.

There remains the highly sensitive issue of the Convention banning biological weapons. A serious verification system has to be set up. I hope that the working group responsible for this matter in Geneva quickly establishes such a system.

My country cannot accept the argument put forward by some that the Organization has failed in its task. We reject the accusations of passivity and helplessness that are sometimes made against it. Nevertheless, we cannot hide the fact that the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary will not be as joyful and as optimistic as we would have liked. The image of the Organization in public opinion is confused, even negative at times. We should try together and with a clear head to identify the reasons for such a situation. I am convinced they have nothing to do with any disaffection with the Organization.

Never have the aspirations of our peoples, especially the youth of the world, so matched the objectives of the Charter: peace and disarmament, environmental protection, solidarity with the very poor, aid to those who suffer, the promotion of democracy, of liberty and basic human rights, and the collective struggle against the major scourges of the end of the century, namely drugs, terrorism and AIDS. In the last few years, we have witnessed the emergence of a body of common values on a world scale. These are the values which the United Nations, like France, upholds; they are the values of peace.

In Europe we built with our neighbours a Community and then a European Union, and in doing so we turned a page of a history that had so often led us to confrontation with each other. Since 1945 Europe has known a period of unparalleled peace. The European Union is on the verge of being enlarged again. France warmly welcomes the forthcoming membership of its neighbours in Central, Eastern and Mediterranean Europe, and will do everything to make it a great success. In this way, the unity of our continent is gradually being organized.

The extension of the boundaries of the European Union does not lead it to close in on itself. Quite the contrary, Europe is opening up to nearby neighbours from the South, as the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona will demonstrate. I should like to emphasize the fundamental importance of that Conference. Europe also wants to develop its relations with Asia; in this regard, the first Europe-Asia Summit, scheduled for March 1996, will be a clear illustration. Lastly, Europe is deepening its partnership with Russia as well as enhancing its close ties with the United States and other partners.

I would like to insist on the fact that the European Union, under the impetus of the French presidency, has confirmed its privileged relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in the context of the Lomé Convention and its special place in North-South relations as the leading donor of development assistance.

In all those areas, Europe has set the example.

These values of peace are also at work in the Middle East. France welcomes the important results that have already been achieved under the peace process. I am thinking of the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993 and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of 26 October 1994. But, above all, I am pleased to see that the principles agreed upon in Oslo have at last borne fruit with the long-awaited initialling of the interim agreement this Sunday. With this, a major turning-point, manifested by the declaration of principles, has been given concrete form. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is now irreversible. I also hope that the talks between Israel and Syria will soon resume and that negotiations will start between Israel and Lebanon so that a just and lasting peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), be guaranteed throughout the region.

As the French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, stated at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary at Geneva, the world needs the United Nations. And it knows it, as proved by the increasing number of tasks Member States have entrusted to the Organization.

Therefore, today's doubts have another origin. I see two major causes. First, the United Nations is not shown sufficient respect, probably because of a lack of political will and resources. Secondly, the Organization has yet to demonstrate its ability to reform itself.

Let me speak of respect first. One will never be able lay sufficient stress on the devastating effect of the sight of the Blue Berets of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) held hostage last spring, in chains and humiliated in their dignity as men and soldiers. In Somalia, in Rwanda prior to Operation Turquoise, in the former Yugoslavia since the outbreak of the conflict, the soldiers of peace had already found themselves in situations that the United Nations accepted but that no Member State would ever have tolerated. It is not surprising that the image of the Organization has thereby suffered.

I want to make myself clear. It is not a matter of questioning the enormous work that has been accomplished by the United Nations peace-keeping forces since the end of the cold war: Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Haiti owe to those forces progress that would have been impossible without the United Nations. In Somalia, the United Nations saved thousands of lives. Its intervention in the countries of the former Yugoslavia made it possible to prevent the war from spreading to Macedonia, to contain and dampen the conflict within central Bosnia and Croatia, and, above all, to ensure the survival of the populations in certain safe areas, in Sarajevo in particular, for three years. However, we have been helpless witnesses to unacceptable suffering, to shameful operations of so-called "ethnic cleansing" and to crimes against humanity,

which the international community was unable to prevent and before which it remained passive.

These tragic events have shown the dangers of mixing humanitarian and military missions and the risks incurred when the mission conferred by the United Nations is lacking in clarity. The Organization needs to make itself respected when it intervenes in a conflict. Last spring, France proposed to its partners that the time to react had come at last. It suggested a change in attitude and policy, with the formation of a powerfully armed Rapid Reaction Force. We have since begun, in liaison with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), decisive action to lift the siege of Sarajevo. This has enabled the United Nations to recover the respect of all parties.

This strengthening of the United Nations capacities for action has no other objective than to place force at the service of law. Only a political solution can truly settle the conflicts brought about by the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

That is why France, together with its partners in the European Union and within the Contact Group, has taken a clear position in favour of a settlement based on two main principles, namely, respect for international law and the support of the settlement by all the populations concerned.

Respect for international law entails a rejection of any solution which, imposed by force, would mean breaking with the founding principles of our Organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a recognized State and a Member of the United Nations. Its territorial integrity and sovereignty must be preserved. There is nothing to discuss or negotiate on those two matters.

Those who have chosen to break the law and who have committed the crimes of which we are all aware will be held responsible individually. The International Criminal Tribunal, whose creation was proposed by France in 1992, must fully exert its jurisdiction.

It is also important that all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be able to assert their specific character through representative entities. Let each entity have direct management of its own affairs and even be able to maintain special relations with States whose populations share the same affinities. All this is legitimate so long as the management of common interests and the exercise of the functions of sovereignty are not brought into question.

The agreement on the principles of a settlement proposed to the protagonists in this conflict by the Contact Group at Geneva on 8 September of this year and accepted by their representatives, meets these two criteria. This is why France has welcomed it, approves it and will support it. The agreement and subsequent actions represent an encouraging step, but they are only a first step. The extent of what remains to be done to end the tragedy of Bosnia clearly shows the major role that the United Nations will have to take. In that mission, it can rely on France's unwavering support. It must also rely on the support of the international community. Peace will be the work of all.

The decline in the respect shown the Organization is evident in another domain that also affects its survival, namely, its financing. It is not normal for the Secretary-General of the world's largest Organization, faced with the threat of imminent bankruptcy, to have fewer avenues of recourse in dealing with his debtors than the smallest of our businesses. It is not acceptable for Member States — and I am not thinking here only of those that are experiencing real economic difficulties — to show such scant respect for the Organization by ignoring the legal obligations they have freely accepted.

France would like to see the United Nations stronger and more respected. For this to occur, however, it is also essential that the Organization be reformed and adapted.

The Secretary-General has spared no effort to open the way to reform. Under his aegis, significant progress has been made in the management of the Organization. All the debates in these past few years were undertaken at his initiative and have been based on his proposals in the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development. France is awaiting with the greatest interest the Agenda for Democracy, which will complete this triptych in a field in which the United Nations is called on to take the leading role. The Organization has need, more than ever, of its Secretary-General in order to adapt to the demands of the twenty-first century.

However, it also requires the political will of its Member States, and this is not sufficiently in evidence. At the opening of this fiftieth session, my wish is a simple one. Let us concentrate on the projects that have already been begun so that they can be completed soon, within the coming year. France will contribute to this, and I should like in this respect to submit a few proposals.

One of our main objectives will be to reach an agreement on enlarging the Security Council. Enlargement will be successful only if the Council continues in a lasting way to be representative of the community of nations through a reasonable increase in the number of its members.

I should like to reaffirm this today: the Security Council will have to welcome Germany and Japan as permanent members, as well as some major States of the developing world. It would also be desirable, naturally, for the Council simultaneously to be opened to some new non-permanent members.

The negotiation on the enlargement of the Security Council now can and should be concluded quickly. Let us wait no longer. It is equally imperative for the discussion on United Nations financing to produce results in the next few months.

But we must be honest with ourselves. This negotiation depends in part on the response to the United States' request for a reduction in its assessed contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations. I shall not try to disguise France's genuine doubts as to the legitimacy of this request.

None the less, for the higher interests of the Organization, my country is ready to examine this question without any a priori conclusions. It does, however, set certain imperative conditions. The first condition is that any new scale must respect fully the real capacity of Member States to pay. On this point I should like once again to pay tribute to your country, Mr. President. Portugal decided this year, of its own accord, to increase its contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations. The second condition is that the agreement must make it possible for the Organization to start off again on sound bases. All existing arrears will therefore have to be paid up. The third condition is that automatic sanctions should be applied to those who do not pay appropriately in order to prevent a recurrence of the current crisis.

This is the modest price of enabling the United Nations to devote itself less nervously to its two principal missions: peace-keeping and development.

Peace-keeping is the domain of the Security Council, the only body empowered to decide on the use of force and to determine the principles and mandate of operations carried out in the interest of international peace and security.

We have to learn the lessons of the experiences of recent years. Aside from traditional peace-keeping, the United Nations may find itself obliged, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council, to resort to force, within the limitations of its means, in order to preserve whatever can be preserved. United Nations military action is often the sole recourse available to the international community.

It is therefore essential to increase the efficiency of the United Nations in the service of peace. Among the most pressing matters, I wish to underline the need to set up capacities for rapid intervention, in the framework of the vital process begun two years ago concerning stand-by forces. I wish also to mention the need to improve the command of operations and the interest in a still greater use of preventive diplomacy.

I would like to say a few words about a situation that is of grave concern to France and that calls specifically for urgent action in preventive diplomacy on a large scale. I am referring to the situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Since the assassination of Burundi's President, Mr. Ndadaye, and the unprecedented tragedy that struck Rwanda, this entire region has been deeply destabilized. More than 2 million Rwandans and Burundis are living outside their country in terrible conditions, with the difficulties that all this entails for the host countries. The absence of lasting political solutions, the climate of insecurity and fear that is kept alive by all the extremists, the suspicion reigning on all sides, the risk of new tragedies — all this compels us to address together and in depth the fundamental problems in this area, taking into account their extreme complexity and the trauma caused by the genocide that has plunged Rwanda into mourning.

France remains convinced that only a comprehensive regional approach that is political in character will make it possible to do this. The principle of a conference on peace, stability and security in the Great Lakes region is now accepted, and we welcome the recent appointment of a Special Representative by the Secretary-General. But time is of the essence.

This conference must be carefully prepared, with the active participation of the States most directly involved and interested in its success, and it must lead to the establishment of a stability pact for the African Great Lakes region. There are three elements that I believe to be essential in this respect: first, the adoption of

principles for the return of the refugees and for national reconciliation, along with a commitment by States not to tolerate any activity hostile to their neighbours on their territory; secondly, the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements among the States concerned to enshrine these principles and commitments and to give them substance; and, finally, the organization of a follow-up mechanism under the aegis of the Security Council.

France holds the conviction that development assistance is the second, or perhaps the first, *raison d'être* of the United Nations. Here, too, the balance sheet invites reflection. How can we not have questions about the feebleness of results, the persistence of extreme poverty, or at times even famine, these crises that erase all prospects of development and bring indescribable suffering to populations? How can we not have questions about the reduced contributions of the world's richest countries?

These failures have gone onto the record. Now we must act, reform and take the best advantage of the experience we have acquired. The institutions of the United Nations and their network of representatives in the field are strong points. The development agencies have to refocus their activity specifically on their objectives. They have to set real priorities aimed at addressing real needs — in other words, first and foremost the needs of the least developed countries.

But it would be shocking if, as I sometimes predict will happen, reform were boosted for the sole purpose of reducing still further the contribution of the richest States in the struggle against human poverty.

France, together with its partners in the European Union, hopes to bring about, through An Agenda for Development a mobilization for development on new foundations. The situation is too disturbing to set the interests of the States of the North and South in opposition to each other. We are all bound by a higher duty: the global struggle against poverty.

If, before this session comes to a close, we are able to enlarge the Security Council, to place United Nations financing on solid bases, to give the Organization the means to intervene rapidly and effectively to maintain peace and, finally, to modernize the modalities and institutions for development assistance, we will truly have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, above and beyond all the speech-making, in a fitting manner: by our actions.

Allow me finally to mention a project that is particularly dear to me: to re-establish, on the occasion of this anniversary, the universality of our Organization, which is reflected in the diversity of cultures and languages manifested here.

Linguistic pluralism is essential. It reflects the right of each Member State to understand the others, but also its duty to make itself understood. A draft resolution on this subject will be submitted to the Assembly; it will deal with the use of languages in the Assembly's deliberations and in the Secretariat, and I hope it will enshrine the need to retain sufficient resources to ensure the provisions of translation and interpretation services. I am convinced that we will reach a consensus in this regard.

Our Organization has deliberately taken its actions for the long term. Recent events may obscure achievements that are nevertheless solid, the results of collective, patient, courageous work. But the gains are there. It is up to each of us to make them known and consolidate them so that the United Nations may continue to fulfil the indispensable role entrusted to it 50 years ago.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali.

Mr. Ali (Pakistan): I extend to you, Sir, my delegation's felicitations on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We have no doubt that with your experience and wisdom, you will add much to this historic session. We also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, who presided over the Assembly at its forty-ninth session with great distinction and wisdom.

To His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our Secretary-General, I would like to pay a special tribute for all he has done for peace and the promotion of the United Nations Charter.

To the Republic of Palau, a new Member of our Organization, I would like to say, "Welcome". We look forward to working closely with that country.

We are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Organization. On this momentous occasion, as the Secretary-General aptly observed in his report (A/49/1), we must resolve to

> "appreciate and strengthen the accomplishments of the past, to recognize and meet the challenges of the present, and to design and implement a plan for the United Nations of the future." *(A/49/1, para. 12)*

We must seize this historic opportunity to forge a global consensus behind development, in all its dimensions, as the lasting foundation for international peace and security and as the greatest hope of humanity.

Pakistan has been strongly committed to the noble vision of the United Nations Charter ever since its independence. We have continuously abided by its principles. We reaffirm our faith in their timeless validity. Pakistan will continue to extend its support and cooperation to the collective efforts of the world for peace.

After exactly 50 years, retrospection evokes mixed feelings. Yet members of our Organization have much to celebrate. The decolonization process, the elimination of apartheid, humanitarian assistance and handling of refugee situations are some of the areas where the United Nations can be proud of its achievements. But much remains to be done.

The end of the cold war provided a historic opportunity to build a new edifice of peace and prosperity: a system in which international relations would be conducted in a spirit of justice, equality and democracy; where poverty would cease to exist, through international cooperation for development; where human rights, especially the right to self-determination, would be promoted and protected; and where aggression would be effectively and collectively challenged wherever and whenever it occurred.

Regrettably, this has not happened. Now, more than ever, it seems that the powerful countries are imposing their will on the United Nations. The decisions and the resolutions adopted by it reflect the interests of a few rather than the good of all. The provisions of collective security are being invoked selectively. Human rights standards are being defended more vociferously in some situations than in others. While in some cases aggression has been forcefully and decisively resisted, in others it has remained unchecked and even rewarded.

Jammu and Kashmir is a case in question, where the Muslim majority continue to be denied their right to self-determination promised to them by Security Council resolutions. These resolutions remain unimplemented. The denial of the right to self-determination led to a massive uprising in the Indian-occupied Kashmir in 1989. Demand for the exercise of this fundamental right was met with a brutal reign of terror unleashed by the Indian occupation forces. It continues unabated and is being pursued with malicious intensity, with devastating consequences for the civilian population of this internationally recognized disputed territory. In Kashmir the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and international morality have been violated with impunity. The massive and widespread human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir have been graphically documented by a large number of international human rights organizations.

Since I stood at this rostrum a year ago, tensions have further escalated in South Asia. One billion people of South Asia are holding their breath as threats of war keep emanating from the leaders in New Delhi.

Jammu and Kashmir continues to burn. The sons and daughters of Kashmir continue to be killed, maimed, executed, tortured and dishonoured. Will the new year of the United Nations bring an end to the rape of Kashmir? Will the beginning of the next half century of the United Nations see the implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir?

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute was not brought to the Security Council by Pakistan. It was India which moved this dispute before the United Nations. The people of Kashmir are looking to this body to deliver them their right to self-determination, as promised to them by this body, by the international community and by India and Pakistan.

Since I stood before the Assembly a year ago, hundreds of Kashmiris have been killed by the Indian forces. Holy places of the Muslims have been razed to the ground by the Indian occupation forces. The holiest of the holy shrines, Charar-e-Sharif, was burned to ashes. The city of Charar-e-Sharif was torched. Is it not ironical that the great Sufi saint, Noor-ud-Din Wali, buried in the shrine there was a man who preached love and tolerance five centuries ago to all humanity, and not just to Muslims? Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Sikhs also seek spiritual solace at his grave. The disdainful act of desecration of this symbol of peace and harmony by the Indian forces has not extinguished the spirit of freedom in Kashmir.

The occupation forces, now numbering more than 600,000, use torture, killings and brutality against the

people, against its leaders, and even against innocent journalists. The people of Kashmir were outraged at the killing of a journalist, Mushtaq Ali, in the bomb blast at the BBC office in Srinagar. The whole of Kashmir went into deep mourning at this wanton killing. But India refuses to look truth in the face.

The people of Kashmir and Pakistan are deeply shocked at the killing of the Norwegian tourist by the kidnappers of the Al-Faran Group. We join our Kashmiri brothers in condemning this horrible act against an innocent tourist, and we demand the release of the remaining four tourists. We have extended every possible cooperation to countries whose citizens' lives are still in danger, but we have a right to ask: Who are Al-Faran? Nobody seems to have heard of this group ever before. There is too much circumstantial evidence which points an accusing finger at New Delhi. We do not want rhetoric; we do not want to score points. We want the safety and the freedom of these innocent tourists. Pakistan calls for an independent and impartial inquiry into the hostage-taking by Al-Faran, under the auspices of the United Nations, so that those responsible for this act can be brought to justice.

India continues to harp on the issue of elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Let it ask the All Parties Hurriyet Conference, the representative party of all Kashmiri organizations in Jammu and Kashmir and the sole voice of the Kashmiri people, whether they want elections, or a plebiscite and the implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

Kashmir is an international dispute. India cannot internalize it behind the garb of bilateralism. If this "non-principle" was allowed to prevail as the basis for the settlement of disputes, then there would be no international morality left. There would be no international order, and the world community could say farewell to peace. It would become the law of the jungle.

In the meantime, along the Line of Control in Kashmir our people are being killed daily and injured by cross-border firing and rocketing. Access to over 80,000 of our people in the Neelam Valley has been cut off by daily Indian firing.

India claims that Pakistani militants cross into Kashmir. In good faith and in order to ascertain the veracity of the Indian allegations, I wrote to the President of the Security Council last year asking for the expansion of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) on both sides of the Line of Control. India's response to this constructive proposal was a firm "No". Instead, it deployed 800 troops per kilometre and built three Security Zones along the Line of Control. I ask: Can there be cross-border violations after such heavy fortifications? By what logic can they reject our proposal for increasing United Nations observers? The answer is obvious. They want merely to score points in international forums. They want to build an argument against Pakistan. They want to convince the world that it is not the Kashmiri people who are alienated from India, but Pakistan that is turning a blind eye to militants crossing the Line of Control from our side.

I ask you to ponder this Indian posture. In history this has always been the language of the aggressor, of those who want to maintain the status quo. I cannot believe that Indian authorities are so naive as to believe that the Kashmiri uprising is foreign- inspired. Other Powers have also made such mistakes in the past, much to their dismay and ultimate discomfiture. India must learn from history. The march of history has never been, and never will be, altered by a systematic falsification of facts or a string of blatant lies. The people of Kashmir have rejected the Indian occupation. No amount of repression, no amount of killings, gang-rapes, torture or mining of villages will deter the people of Jammu and Kashmir from winning their right to self-determination.

This truth is being lost on New Delhi. For our part, we are prepared for dialogue. We are prepared for mediation by the Secretary-General or by the President of the Assembly, or by any peace-loving country under any modality, under any arrangement.

We are prepared for peace. We want conflict resolution. We want talks but the talks must be on the substantive issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Talks must aim at achieving settlement. Talks must be on the basis of a structured agenda. Once the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is resolved, it will open the door for a solution to all other Indo-Pakistan disputes. But our offers of talks have fallen on deaf ears. India now hides behind a new subterfuge that talks should be unconditional, that talks must be without an agenda. We cannot accept this because during the last 23 years under the Simla Agreement, the two Foreign Secretaries met seven times without any result. Every time a meeting takes place the Indian side states that Kashmir is an integral part of India and not an international dispute. This is a negation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. This is a negation of the Simla Agreement, and I quote article 6 of the Simla Agreement, which states,

> "Both Governments agree ... to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and of normalization of relations",

including

> "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir".

The Simla Agreement is fully within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

Then we are told that the Security Council resolutions are outdated. What will the world look like if countries were allowed unilaterally to reject United Nations resolutions, and if this deviationist stance were to become a universal principle of international morality? Can morality become outdated? Can evil become good with time?

Instead, India has gone on to a feverish arms race. When they exploded their nuclear bomb in 1974, we told them not to push South Asia into a nuclear arms race. But our warnings were not heeded and now, along with its massive blue-water navy, which threatens the shores of Africa and Asia, they have launched into an arms race in South Asia. Their Prithvi missiles are Pakistan-specific. The Prithvi missile is a tension multiplier: it gives Pakistan only three minutes' response time.

What are they arming themselves for? Who threatens them in Asia? Their leaders talk of extending the Indian military and naval might to the shores of the Indian Ocean. In this day and age this approach is downright anachronistic.

During the Eighth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was held in New Delhi in May this year, President Leghari urged Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and the Indian leadership not to take this fateful step. He urged the Indian leadership to come to the table and solve the core Kashmir dispute. He also warned that if India continued with this feverish race for arms, and now for missiles, then Pakistan would have no choice but to rethink its options within the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Having fought three wars to defend its territory, the people of Pakistan feel threatened. That is why peace is important. That is why peace is vital for Pakistan But I want to make it absolutely clear — and let there be no doubt about it in anyone's mind — that the people of Pakistan have the will to survive, and survive they will with dignity and honour.

One fifth of humanity, a billion people, live in the seven countries of South Asia. The world is passing us by. Our people are trapped in poverty, in hunger, in disease and unemployment. Don't our people deserve better? Don't they deserve a chance? Don't six countries have a right to live in peace in South Asia? It is our earnest hope that those in New Delhi who threaten war should look at the state of poverty of their own people. We hope that they have the political will to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes, and there will be many peace dividends if peace comes to South Asia.

Peace will be worth their while. Trade will flourish, mega- projects in the Gulf, from Iran and from Central Asia will bring prosperity to our peoples. I hope that better counsel will prevail in New Delhi and I hope there are still men of peace and vision left in India who will not be the prisoners of the acrimonies of history but will look to the future of a billion people.

The Secretary-General, in his 1995 report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1), has recognized the aggravation of relations between India and Pakistan as a result of increasing incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. We would like, in particular, to facilitate the search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute. We hope that India will also accept the United Nations Secretary-General's offer of good offices, as Pakistan has done. We also sincerely hope that the United Nations General Assembly will use its authority to exert pressure on India to stop immediately the brutal violations of human rights and to implement the Security Council resolutions which ask for the holding of a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.

What has been happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the past few years is a monumental tragedy. The world has witnessed a Member State of the United Nations being made victim of brutal aggression and its people subjected to atrocities, massive violations of human rights, ethnic cleansing and the abhorrent practice of genocide — acts which would put the horrors of the Second World War to shame. The killing fields of Srebrenica and Zepa are sadly reminiscent of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Yet the international response has been totally inadequate and has often come too late. The Bosnian Muslims were left to defend themselves against a vastly superior military machine, their hands tied by an unjustified arms embargo.

Pakistan strongly reiterates its firm support for the demand by the Bosnian people for the lifting of the arms embargo. For its part, Pakistan remains strongly committed to offering every possible assistance to the people and Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must seek credible international guarantees for the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If one step is taken towards peace, the world of Islam is prepared to take two steps more. We have taken note of the action taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and of the establishment of the rapid reaction force. We urge the NATO countries not to relent on the air strikes until the Serbian aggressors and delinquents are made to pay a price for their deeds and to act like civilized people. Unless peace is fully restored and a just and equitable settlement is in place, the OIC will reserve its right to challenge the illegal United Nations arms embargo on the Bosnian people.

We fully support the Croatian efforts to recover Krajina and their other territories from Serbian military occupation. We demand that in the settlement Srebrenica and Zepa be restored to their original United Nations-designated safe-area status. We also demand that Kosovo and Sanjak be protected from Serbian "ethnic cleansing". The Declaration of Principles signed recently in Geneva is something we consider well-begun but only half-done. There are many pitfalls, and we see many dangers in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. A lot more vision and courage on the part of the world community will be required if the entire peace plan is to be fully implemented. We hope that the United Nations, the European Union and NATO will demonstrate the courage required to resolve the crisis in the Balkans.

The situation in Afghanistan makes us very sad. The people of Afghanistan wait in anguish for peace to return to their tortured land. There appears to be no end to the fighting between the various groups. One and a half million Afghans are still in my country. They too, like us, look to the United Nations and to the OIC to bring peace to their land.

I should like to state here unequivocally, and with all the responsibility at our command, that in no way have we interfered in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. We would also urge that no other country do so. We would urge other States not to increase the suffering of the Afghan people by supporting one group or the other. We should all support United Nations Special Representative Mahmoud Mestiri's mission to bring peace to Afghanistan, a peace based on accommodation for all factions and all groups. This peace can be achieved only through mutual accommodation and national reconciliation. In the last 18 months, our Mission has twice been subjected to mob attacks. In the second one, 26 of our officials were injured, including Ambassador Qazi Humayun, and one staffer was killed. This is most unfortunate. We hope that the sanctity of the Mission will be respected and that the Vienna Conventions will be honoured.

For over a decade, Pakistan supported the legitimate struggle of our Afghan brothers against foreign intervention. Once this intervention was ended, Pakistan promoted accords among the Afghan parties and factions for a peaceful transition from war to peace. It was as a consequence of the compromise achieved in the Islamabad accord of May 1992 that President Rabbani took office. His Government was to be a transitional one and was to prepare for a broad-based and popular government representing all regions and political forces in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, as the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Mestiri, has clearly stated, the regime in Kabul did not allow the promised transition to a representative government to take place.

In large measure because of this refusal to live up to solemn agreements, fighting in Afghanistan has been endemic during the past few years. The fortunes of war recently turned against President Rabbani's regime because it became increasingly unpopular with the Afghan people. A regime in Kabul whose de facto legitimacy we have not questioned, a regime in Kabul that today controls only 5 of about 32 provinces in Afghanistan: this regime has tested our patience again and again.

This regime chooses to punish unarmed and innocent staffers and the Ambassador. It chooses to burn down our Embassy and its premises. But this has not made Pakistanis angry at the Afghan nation. It has merely made us sad, because this regime has forgotten the 14 years of the support given and the sacrifices made by the people of Pakistan for their freedom. Instead, it chooses to please those who destroyed their country, who killed and maimed millions of Afghan men, women and children, who destroyed houses, who destroyed people's lives, who planted millions of land-mines across the country — a large number of which have yet to be removed. By these wanton acts, which go against the Vienna Conventions, the Kabul regime wants to win the

favour of those who seek to fish in the troubled waters of Afghanistan.

The Kabul regime seeks to survive with the help of military support from the enemies of the Afghan nation, while it rules through a minority. It seeks to conquer Afghanistan through military force. This is against history. This will not happen. The regime is forgetting the code of honour of the Afghan nation. While we in Pakistan are sad at what has happened to our countrymen in Kabul, the chivalrous Afghan people are angered and incensed. We take no responsibility for what the Afghan people will do to vindicate their honour. They know that there never was, and never will be, interference from Pakistan. The world knows that a faltering regime always wants to lay its follies and its internal defeats at the doorsteps of others, and for this the Afghan nation will demand, and get, retribution.

However, this provocation will not deter us from our steadfast path of neutrality towards the Afghan people and the unity of Afghanistan or from non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs or our abiding friendship and brotherhood with the Afghan nation. In the meantime, we would like to assure the people of Afghanistan that we shall stand by them in their hour of trial. We shall not abandon them.

Pakistan was closely associated with the third round of United Nations-sponsored inter-Tajik talks. While I pay tribute to the United Nations Special Representative, Ambassador Píriz-Ballón, for his statesmanship, which led to the main elements for peace in Tajikistan, let me add that our role too was to bring about national reconciliation in that country. We shall continue to cooperate with the United Nations to bring about complete peace in our friendly neighbour Tajikistan.

Mr. Kulla (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The events in Azerbaijan, too, are a matter of deep concern to us. We fully support the efforts of President Gaider Aliyev for an equitable settlement of the Nagorny-Karabakh dispute; a settlement which is based on the removal of aggression against Azerbaijan.

We fully support the Middle East peace process. We hope that the Palestine Liberation Organization-Israeli accord is implemented in letter and spirit without any recourse to delay by Israel. We have supported the Jordan-Israeli peace accord and favour a negotiated settlement of related issues, especially the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon and Jerusalem.

Pakistan continues to be deeply concerned over the situation in Somalia. The United Nations, along with the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference must endeavour to promote an early political solution in that country and its eventual reconstruction.

In other areas which impinge on the peace and stability of the world can be seen the lack of progress in the field of disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons.

The end of the bipolar world based on hostile camps has removed the impediments to pursuing the goal of nuclear disarmament. Yet the goal remains elusive. It is incomprehensible why commitments cannot be translated into reality. The agreements reached on the reduction of strategic arms still fall far short of the expectations raised by the end of the cold war. The world should resolve to remove the scourge of nuclear weapons from the face of this earth.

Until nuclear disarmament is realized, the nuclear-weapon States should give unconditional security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. In this context, the Conference on Disarmament should establish an ad hoc committee right at the beginning of 1996 to negotiate a legally binding convention on security assurances. The Conference on Disarmament should also continue its work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty for its early conclusion.

Parallel to all these global efforts, regional avenues should be promoted for nuclear non-proliferation. The concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones is finally being translated into reality in different parts of the world. Unfortunately, the proposal Pakistan made 20 years ago to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia has not even taken off because of the negative attitude of certain States in the region. Nevertheless, Pakistan has continued to advocate efforts to eliminate the dangers of proliferation from South Asia. To that end, we have made several suggestions. Regrettably, they have not evoked a positive response from India.

Pakistan has also proposed conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will deliberate upon this approach and evolve guidelines to bring at par the weaponry and forces of the regional States.

In our view, the emerging role of the United Nations as a peace maker and a peace-keeper would greatly help in achieving peace and harmony at the regional as well as the global levels. We believe that preventive diplomacy is the cornerstone of United Nations peace efforts. Pakistan has been actively cooperating and participating in a major way in United Nations peace-keeping efforts. It is a matter of immense satisfaction that today Pakistan is the third largest troop-contributing country to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Pakistan believes that certain operational realities must be justified for the success of such operations. We need a clear commitment from the international community, accompanied by a clear political direction and a unified command structure.

In order to ensure better and effective implementation of Security Council resolutions, there is a need for thorough consultations between the members of the Council, as well as actual troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, at all stages of any peace-keeping operation.

As we enter the new millennium, our collective objective should be to maximize economic growth leading towards the ultimate objective of human development. To promote peace and prosperity, it is essential to facilitate rather than restrain the application of modern technology for economic and social development.

Adequate official resources should be channelled to those developing countries which are implementing far-reaching economic reforms and liberalization measures. A net flow of official assistance should be directed in particular towards the eradication of poverty, human and social development programmes and sustainable growth in the developing countries. This is particularly true of Africa, a continent which has been largely bypassed by the economics of the twentieth century. For our part, Pakistan extends full support to the United Nations development assistance plans for Africa and for the Sahel.

Pakistan is encouraged by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, despite the partial and unequal response to the trade interests of the developing countries. The global economy is finally coming out of recession. New growth is likely to be generated mostly in the developing countries, whose integration into the world's financial and trading system can immensely contribute towards global output. There is, therefore, a unique opportunity to create a just, fair, equitable and non-discriminatory global economy.

Free markets and open economies do not imply a disregard for the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged. This principle must be applied as much among nations as within nations. The aim must be to improve living conditions for all within a dynamic economic framework. Pakistan welcomes the constructive outcome of the recently held Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

We in Pakistan are particularly aware of the need to address the problems of the deprived segments of our society. Development initiatives, such as the Social Action Programme, are being formulated within the constitutional framework. Our Constitution contains a number of articles related to social integration with particular reference to women and children and religious and ethnic minorities, as well as those living in poverty. Special efforts are being made to ensure the full participation of women in nation building. Pakistan's approach to employment and poverty eradication combines policies for national growth, employment and price stabilization with programmes that target the poor and the vulnerable.

Pakistan would like to reiterate the importance it has always attached to the reform of the United Nations. Pakistan supports the reaffirmation made by the Non-Aligned Movement that both the reform and expansion aspects of the Security Council should take into account the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. Pakistan remains strongly opposed to centres of privilege within the United Nations system. These are anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of sovereign equality.

In conclusion, the challenges that Member States of the United Nations confront are indeed forbidding. Yet the opportunities for genuine peace and universal prosperity are most promising. With good will and cooperation, all Member States can make significant progress at this historic session towards the vision of peace, progress and human solidarity envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. This is an extraordinary moment of opportunity. The decisions we take today will

determine whether the new era will be one of hope and prosperity or one of despair and deprivation. The choices to build a peaceful world are therefore entirely in our own hands.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Guido di Tella.

Mr. Di Tella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Our presence here at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly holds a very special meaning. On this occasion, we are not gathered here simply to reenact the annual ritual of exchanging views and official national positions on the principal problems that encumber the international agenda. These first 50 years during which the Organization has carried out its noble task have been marked by successes and disappointments.

As President Menem said in this very forum a year ago, the real situation in the world today offers a balance of light and shadow in which encouraging signs of convergence exist alongside other signs that seem to point to the persistence of injustice and disagreement. The search for a delicate balance of peace and security with development and social justice is the goal which we must constantly pursue. This search must be translated into concrete facts which demonstrate on this anniversary, through the actions of each and every Member State, the extent to which we have faithfully respected the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

At this historic moment, my country has chosen actively to involve itself in the resolution of serious international crises through the concerted action of the United Nations.

The tragic situation in the Balkans has found Argentina present in solidarity, through its troops, in search of a space for dialogue and understanding after five years of blood and fire. Today we are witnessing the rebirth of hope, starting with the recent Geneva agreements and those that were signed yesterday. We hope that the peoples of the new republics of the Balkans can, once and for all, begin life again in peace after such enormous suffering, so much violence and so many unnecessary deaths.

The Middle East has suffered the attacks of extremism; yet the peace process initiated in 1993 forges ahead. On behalf of the people and the Government of Argentina, I pay a tribute to the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian people, who, despite provocations and the legitimate grievances of those who suffer, have managed to fix their eyes on the future and continue the task of concluding agreements on each of the points that comprise the complex agenda for peace in the Middle East.

We cannot forget our African brothers and sisters, who have been affected by situations in which political struggles and the survival of the least fortunate are combined in a most dramatic fashion. It is precisely in those situations that we must reaffirm our contribution and our solidarity, because we cannot remain indifferent to the suffering and deprivation of so many human beings without neglecting the commitments dictated to us by the Charter and imposed upon us by human solidarity. To the extent of our ability, we maintain our participation in the solution of such problems as those of Western Sahara, Mozambique and Angola, a neighbour country of ours in the South Atlantic with which we will cooperate actively in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

The case of Haiti warrants my particular consideration, since it deals with an issue that directly affects our region of Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, I would like to express the Argentine Government's great pleasure at the successful process that culminated in the adoption of Security Council resolution 940 (1994). Only through that resolution could the Government legitimately elected by the Haitian people be reestablished — a Government which, with moving endurance and commitment, is restoring institutional normalcy and again moving ahead on the road to economic development.

Argentina is proud of its character as a Latin American nation. In just a few days, we will have the high honour of hosting the Fifth Ibero-American Summit, at which all the nations of our region, together with their respective mother countries, all linked by a common history and culture, will set an inspiring example of dialogue and cooperation in the search for solutions adapted to our present reality. It is precisely this reality and the prospects we envisage for it that make us look with optimism to a Latin American future based on democracy, peace and integration.

The Argentine commitment to peace was recently demonstrated once again through the active exercise of the role mandated to us, together with Brazil, Chile and the United States of America, as guarantors of the 1942

Rio Protocol, in an effort to bring the peoples of Ecuador and Peru together once and for all.

The President returned to the Chair.

Building upon political and economic stability, ambitious mechanisms for integration have been designed that contribute to consolidating the opening of our economies, the transparency of our markets, and the growth of commercial exchange with other regions — in short, the creation of the conditions necessary to secure a better future for our peoples.

In our case, we have made the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) a priority in our foreign policy, with the understanding not only that its strengthening will boost our economy and those of its member countries, but also, and most especially, that it is thanks to this open approach that the men and women of our country and our region can come together today in an atmosphere of economic growth after so many years of disillusionment and frustration.

In Argentina, we place special emphasis on the following principles: good governance; the struggle against corruption; discipline in fiscal matters; accountability in the management of public finances; respect for human rights; legal equality for foreign investments; and full authority for institutions within the rule of law. These are the principles that form the framework designed to give a greater boost to economic activity as a necessary motor for the well-being of the Argentina people.

This framework of recovery and harmony within Latin America, however, raises important issues which remain unresolved.

In the South Atlantic, the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime spaces has not yet been resolved. We will not cite yet again the numerous resolutions in which the General Assembly and the decolonization Committee have categorically and repeatedly stated their position on this matter. Let me simply recall that all of these include a clear and direct appeal to the two countries involved — Argentina and the United Kingdom — to reach a negotiated settlement of this dispute. This appeal from the Assembly remains unheeded, despite the willingness we have constantly shown and the excellent relations that bind our two countries. This makes the issue even more baffling.

In spite of this, we maintain a cooperative effort with regard to the exploitation of fishing resources in the area in an attempt to protect the biomass and at the same time ensure that significant economic activity continues.

With regard to oil, given the non-renewable character of the resources and the existence of a consolidated international doctrine which proscribes the unilateral exploitation of disputed resources, we are reaching a temporary understanding that allows us to engage in further exploration and exploitation while avoiding the creation of new sources of tension which might discourage initiatives from the private sector.

This very morning we and the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Malcolm Rifkind, signed a joint declaration which will allow us to move forward together in this spirit.

With respect to the inhabitants of the islands, I repeat our determination to guarantee total respect for their way of life, their culture, habits and institutions.

The dispute over the Malvinas Islands will not disappear as if by magic. The peaceful recovery of the exercise of full sovereignty over all the territories in dispute and the surrounding waters, and respect for the way of life of the islands' inhabitants, are today part of Argentina's Constitution, on which there was consensus across the entire political spectrum of my country. Only rational dialogue, without any a priori conditions from either party, will permit us to make progress towards the final implementation of the resolutions of the Assembly and of the Decolonization Committee.

At the end of this year Argentina will conclude its term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In our two years as a member we have witnessed numerous situations that have required an immediate response on the part of the Council. Responding to these situations has not been an easy task, and at times the serious problems that have given rise to them have failed to receive full attention. Nevertheless, the Council's response has confirmed on each occasion its character as the central and indispensable instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our commitment to the work of the Council has not been limited to its discussions; it has extended to Argentina's contribution to peace-keeping operations, the largest in our region. Our presence in the former

Yugoslavia, in Cyprus, Mozambique, Haiti and Kuwait — to name but a few operations — is tangible proof of our concrete, and not just rhetorical, contribution to international peace and cooperation.

In recent days much has been said about the process of reform of the Security Council. If anything has been proved by the extended deliberations of the ad hoc Open-ended Working Group established for this purpose, it is the extreme difficulty of finding a formula, acceptable to everyone, that does not introduce imbalances into the region.

In our delegation's view, the fundamental task in this respect is to protect and improve the efficiency and expeditiousness of the Council. In order to achieve this, a careful, limited increase in the membership would be in order, should there be the necessary consensus. This increase could be supplemented with a new procedure aimed at achieving a greater representativeness, which, by means of rotation mechanisms, would enable several of the most interested countries of different regions, as well as those which stand to wait many years before joining the Council, to take part more regularly in its deliberations.

We believe that those countries which are legitimately interested in taking part in the daily construction of a stable and peaceful world order could fulfil their aspirations in this way.

Moreover, further changes in the procedure of the Council should be introduced in order to increase its transparency and strengthen the process of dialogue and exchange of information. Over the past two years we have actively promoted such progress, being convinced that the contribution of the international community to the solution of its crises would be facilitated if all its members had more criteria and information on which to base their decisions.

This matter is of undeniable importance, since the Security Council is the body ultimately entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. This requires that we proceed with the utmost care, searching relentlessly for consensus.

This year has been marked by the positive contribution to international peace made here in New York, when the 179 States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), decided to extend it unconditionally and indefinitely. We are concerned about the ongoing nuclear-test programmes. Therefore, we look forward to the prompt conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, without exceptions or permissible thresholds. Likewise, we hope that the Conference on Disarmament will address without delay the negotiation of a convention banning the production of fissionable material.

It is encouraging to note the increased awareness of what the Secretary-General has rightly called the "international humanitarian crisis" of anti-personnel mines. We trust that the 1981 Convention on inhumane weapons will be strengthened as a result of the meeting to be held in Vienna in the next few days.For our part, in addition to supporting the Assembly resolutions on the subject, we have declared a unilateral moratorium on mine production, and with regard to a case which affects us directly — the mines planted by our armed forces on the Malvinas Islands in 1982 — we have offered our cooperation and financial help to the United Kingdom for their removal, which is proceeding with the greatly appreciated cooperation of the United States.

Apart from the struggle for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, new challenges to peace and stability, including international terrorism, have emerged. Today no one can feel safe from the action of groups which are international in structure and very often rely on the active or passive support of certain States. Almost every day gruesome attacks reflect the reality of this new threat, which calls for a determined and unequivocal response by the international community.

We have drawn this issue to the attention of the Security Council, and we are confident that as a result urgent action at the national, regional and international levels will be taken to promote legislative harmonization and cooperation in the judicial, police and even intelligence spheres, in order to halt this insidious manifestation of terror.

However, the pressing challenges requiring international action are not restricted to the domain of security. Emergency assistance activities and the subsequent stage of rehabilitation for development constitute a priority task for the United Nations. For this reason, in 1994 we proposed the "White Helmets" initiative, which aims to deliver assistance in cases of extreme urgency and to mobilize resources for specific instances of extreme poverty. We are pleased to note that the initiative was adopted by consensus in resolution 49/139 B, with the formidable support of 67 co-sponsors. In the future we will further define details of the

initiative, which has already been implemented in very successful pilot projects in our region. We hope to extend this initiative to other parts of the world where even greater need is experienced.

From a historical perspective, 50 years may not be many, but they are not insignificant in the life of an international organization that every day has to address numerous and complex issues. Today we find the United Nations committed to the solution of international crises which affect international peace and security, a far cry from the marginalization of the Organization during the cold war. The United Nations is actively involved in advances on great social issues by means of international conferences such as those of Vienna, on human rights; Cairo, on population; Copenhagen, on social matters; and Beijing, on women.

These meetings reflect the new and vigorous stage reached by multilateralism, which elicits universally accepted responses to the great currents of sustainable human development, and acts in strict conformity with the provisions of the Charter, under which the promotion of human welfare, development and dignity are harmonious and mutually complementary priorities. We remain actively committed to work to achieve these priorities in the framework of the United Nations, thus renewing the commitment of 1945, towards which the current reform process will make a substantive contribution, with the same faith we had then, nourished by decades of cooperation.

The year 1995 is not only the year that marks the half century of the United Nations. Two years ago the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/126, declared 1995 the United Nations Year for Tolerance. It occurs to me that the forefathers of the United Nations must have had the idea of tolerance deeply etched in their minds when they set the foundations of this unique endeavour.

International reality reminds us how often we forget tolerance, how often we reject, proscribe or ignore others for what they are, think, say or do, or simply for existing. May this anniversary be a timely occasion to remember the need to reaffirm in our minds, in the education of our children and in our acts, tolerance, and, with it, the culture of peace.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.